

The Iwasaki patent has a U.S. filing date of October 17, 1995. The subject application, which is a divisional Application No. 08/479,372, has an effective U.S. filing date of June 7, 1995. Iwasaki therefore does not qualify as prior art.

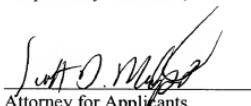
The Office Action on page 3 also inferentially relies on U.S. Patent No. 6,278,233 (Sanou). This patent was filed on April 8, 1998, and thus also fails to qualify as prior art.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Due consideration and prompt passage to issue are also respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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